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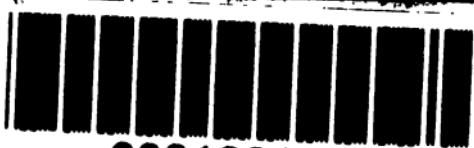
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REVERENCE
FOR THE
SANCTUARY

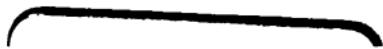
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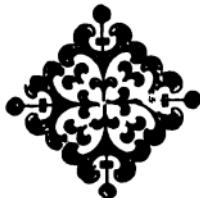
REVERENCE
FOR
THE SANCTUARY.



Reverence for the Sanctuary.

By Mrs. PAUL J. TURQUAND

With Introductory Preface and Memoir by her
Husband



London

Henry James Tresidder 17 Ave Maria Lane
Paternoster Row

G. Peverall Walworth Road

1861



PREFACE.

To the Members of the Church and Congregation assembling in York Street Chapel, Walworth.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The following essay, on Reverence for the Sanctuary, was found amongst the papers of my late beloved wife. It was written about two years before her death; and it is but just to her talents to state, that it was composed under circumstances of great disadvantage. Not only had she to attend to the duties imposed on her by her connection with the church, as well as to meet the claims of a young family, but her health was so precarious, and her strength so weak, as to render her incapable of anything like prolonged effort. Nor did she revise it for the press. I see, from various marginal notes, that she intended to re-

cast some portions of the essay, and to recompose others; but neither strength nor time were granted her to do so. After all, the defects were more apparent to her eye than they will be to others; and I cannot but think that, had opportunities been given her for correction and revision, she would have had to confess, as not a few others have done,—“Well, if I wait till I make my book perfect, I shall never send it out at all.”

Feeling that, in my sorrow, I was myself a very unsuitable person to judge of the real merits of the composition—for a tear in the heart, like a tear in the eye, is apt to magnify the object on which we look—I lent it to various friends on whose judgment I could rely, asking for their candid opinion as to the desirableness of its publication. They all were unanimous in saying they believed it would be likely to do much good. Some, it is true, thought the stronger expressions should be modified, as being a little too severe; but it was contrary to my feelings to alter a single word; and as nothing personal was intended, I could not conceive of their doing any harm. I send it forth, then, just as

I found it, that her own utterance may be heard on this most important subject.

I do so because it *gratifies and soothes my own heart*. Some of you know what it is to lose a wife, or that friend which is your nearest and dearest. And have you not felt a strong desire to perpetuate their names, and to prolong their memory and influence on this earth? I can well understand the feeling which led the ancients to embalm their dead, and to try and arrest the progress of decay on the outward form. To do this was, I knew, impossible, as it regarded her frail and lovely body; but it does yield a real satisfaction to my spirit that her mind, through this essay, will still live on earth, and "that, though dead, she yet speaketh."

I know, too, how ardently she wished to be remembered by her *little children*. They are too young to know her worth, or to feel her loss; yet her dying request was that I would talk to them of their mother, and urge them so to live that they might meet her in glory. What will they read with greater interest, if God spare their lives, than this book, written by that soft hand which first supplied their wants, smoothed

their pillows, and guided their infant steps? I cannot but pray that this book may lead them to think often of that Saviour whom their mother loved, and that God whom she daily and hourly worshipped. What if she who gave them natural life was, by God's Spirit, to be thus the means of their spiritual life? Pardon me for saying that I cherish the hope; then mother and children would be happier in each other's society in glory.

But yet more, I have decided on publishing this *Essay for your sake*,—*you, the people of my pastoral charge*. I know that my dear wife's highest aim, next to her own salvation, was your good. Whilst she loved all God's people, what more natural than that her affections should be chiefly drawn forth to the flock over which her husband presided in the Lord? For you she thought and laboured, planned and prayed. Never were you absent from her mind,—certainly never when she knelt at the throne of grace. Many blessings have you already received in answer to her prayers; and I doubt not that she had your advantage chiefly in her mind when she wrote the following pages. Her

aim was to make the worship at York Street as profitable as possible; and though there was much in your devout manner which contrasted favorably with other congregations, yet knowing how frail man is, and how liable, without constant watchfulness, to degenerate, she denounced faults which she had observed, rather as warnings than as censures, real or implied, on your sanctuary conduct. Could you hear her voice speaking to you from heaven now, she would say, "God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

You will, I am sure, welcome this little Essay as a lasting memorial of one you so greatly loved. And permit me, in her name, to thank you for that unvarying kindness which you manifested towards her. My feelings will be best expressed in the words of Ruth, when addressing the friends of Naomi—"The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me."

As the sketch of my dear wife's life and character has been repeatedly asked for, and is now out of print, I have thought it well to insert it here.

Commending this little book to the blessing of
God and to your careful perusal, and trusting
we all may worship together in the temple above,

Believe me to remain,
My dear friends,
Your affectionate Pastor,
PAUL JAMES TURQUAND.

WALWORTH; Feb., 1861.

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MEMOIR OF MRS. PAUL J. TURQUAND.

MARY EMMA TURQUAND was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and died at Walworth, February 9th, 1860. As her talents were superior, her usefulness remarkable, and as, withal, she was greatly beloved, it has been thought well to indicate the principal incidents in her life, and the leading features of her character.

The basis of her character *was her piety*. All who knew her are free to confess this was of no ordinary kind. Her first religious impressions were received from her mother, to whose instructions, and especially to whose life, she was chiefly indebted; but it was not till she came to London and attended the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Haselgrave, followed by the affectionate preaching of the Rev. J. H. Evans, that —when about seventeen years of age—she was led to profess openly her attachment to her Saviour. Then she set herself determinately to

the work of self-discipline. The Bible was her constant companion, and the underlined verses, as well as marginal notes, plainly show how fully the Old Testament, as well as the New, was studied. Often did she say, "That the ignorance of Christians of many portions of Holy Scripture surprised and depressed her." Constantly, too, did she seek communion with her heavenly Father, and frequently observed, "That a few moments of real fellowship with God was to her of more spiritual good than prolonged prayer." "My aim, too, is to walk with Jesus, the living, personal Saviour. He is as much with each Christian now as He was with His disciples of old; and often during the day do I speak with Him, as if He stood at my side." Hence she had but little relish for the show or pleasures of the world. As just one testimony which was borne to her piety, we may mention that a sceptical friend, who had frequent opportunities of meeting her, remarked, "That the best evidence he ever had of the truth of Christianity was the intelligent conversation, and the cheerful and attractive character of the piety, of Mrs. Turquand."

Nor did she confine her solicitudes to herself. She was wont to observe that the best way to secure was to impart, and most earnestly sought the instruction and conversion of others. The houses of the poor and sick were visited, to lead them to Him who could make rich in faith and heal the maladies of the soul. But it was in

the Sunday-school that she found her most appropriate sphere of labour. When Mr. Brock came to London she united herself to the church under his pastoral care, and became the teacher of the senior class of female scholars. Though living four miles from Bloomsbury Chapel, she was always in time, usually the first teacher present. Her lessons were thoroughly studied; and numerous note-books yet remain to testify to her assiduity and skill. Each Tuesday in the week was set apart for this purpose; and finding that reading the Bible in French led her to see the force of many passages which, through familiarity with the words in the ordinary version, escaped her attention, she resolved to master the original. Greek then became her study, and she succeeded in acquiring a sufficient knowledge of that tongue to read the Greek Testament with comparative ease and pleasure. Occasionally the scholars of her class were invited to her house for social intercourse and devotional exercises; so that she secured their love whilst she imparted instruction. For about five years did she thus labour; nor are blessed results wanting. Thirteen of her former scholars have already united themselves to the church of Christ assembling in Bloomsbury Chapel, all of whom ascribe their conversion to her instrumentality. The seed she planted may yet be buried in other hearts, so that the amount of good she accomplished will only be known in the final day.

Many Christians, while active abroad, are forgetful of the wants of those at home. It was not so, however, with her. The domestic servants in her family were called together twice a week, when her health permitted, for religious instruction. Two have already made a profession of Christianity ; whilst the altered character of others give pleasing evidence of her power. The frequent visits of those who were once her servants, but who, from various causes, had left her house, show how fully she secured the affections of all who were about her.

Nor did she seek to be useful only with her tongue. When any subject of importance struck her mind, she would forward an essay on it to some religious periodical. Most of these were published, though some remain in manuscript, especially one of considerable length, on "Reverence for the Sanctuary." Her numerous friends, too, from all parts of the country, kept her pen continually employed. When in any circumstances of doubt or difficulty, she was appealed to for counsel and advice ; and so sound was her judgment, and fertile her resources, that some have declared they would undertake nothing without her guidance and sanction. Friendships with her were not hastily formed, but, once begun, ended only with her life.

It is not, then, to be wondered at, that a student, just entering on an unusually arduous

post, and having, yet untried, to succeed one of the most distinguished preachers and pastors of the day, should have thought that he discovered in such a person just the helpmeet he required. However high his expectations may have been, they were not, in any matter respecting her, disappointed. Without neglecting her own duties, or intruding into the minister's province, she yet rendered him most efficient aid. When a crowd of visitors pressed, she would shield him from their importunity, and guard vigilantly the sacred hours of study. When the calls he had to make were more than he could compass, she cheerfully shared them with him. Knowing full well the circumstances of the church and congregation, not seldom would she suggest an appropriate text from which to preach. The hymns were invariably her selection; and never would she allow her husband to go forth to his Sabbath duties without kneeling for a few moments with him to implore the Divine aid and blessing. Her perception of character was intuitive, and her estimates of talent and adaptation unusually correct. Hence she often indicated who was the right person to fill a vacant post. All the societies connected with the chapel were aided by her counsel and her efforts. For some years she was the valued secretary to the ladies' committee of the Walworth Auxiliary to the Bible Society. The poor came to her for relief; the perplexed for direction; the mourner for comfort. She

attracted all classes by her love, and won the respect of all by her judicious conduct and powerful mind. The former pastor, the Rev. G. Clayton, remarked respecting her:—"Though her course amongst us has been short, not quite six years, yet, if estimated by what she has done, it has been long indeed." And another, who knew her from the very commencement, observed, "Not only am I unable to detect a single unwise word, or injudicious act, in looking back on her history at Walworth, but everything to draw forth my admiration and love." Such a wife we may almost say was the minister's co-pastor. God help the man who, having had such a companion, is left to go on his way alone.

Now, it may be thought, that one so highly endowed would be wanting in that adaptation for home duties which some others possess. But Mrs. Turquand was the most loving, judicious, and devoted of mothers. She had three children, the eldest of whom, at the time of her death, was little more than five years old. Truly beautiful was it to see and hear her, each morning, teaching the two elder of these. Inexpressibly did she desire to live, that she might form their characters, and bring them up to love and serve Jesus. Her frequent prayer soon after her marriage was, "May I never have any children, or live to train them." But she learnt, even in this matter, to say, "We must not dictate to God." When informed

that her case was hopeless, with a bursting heart, and eyes full of tears, she exclaimed, "My poor dear little children—but I leave them with Jesus; His love and care are beyond a mother's." And then devised plans for their physical, mental, and especially for their spiritual education. As her strength permitted, she wrote various letters on Sin, Repentance, Faith, and Salvation, &c., in language and illustration suited to the capacity of children, which she wished read to them, as from her, when they were old enough to receive them. And a few days before her death, she wrote prayers, which she wished her children to learn. The following are the morning and evening prayers for her little son :

MORNING PRAYER.

"O God, my Father, who art in heaven, I thank thee for taking care of me all night, and letting nothing harm any of us. I thank Thee for these nice clothes, and my good breakfast, and for all my kind friends. Help me to be good to-day. Help me to obey papa, and to be kind to my sisters and to everybody. Help me to speak the truth, and to say no unkind, rude, or naughty words. Help me not to be selfish, or cross, or impatient. Help me to teach my sisters to be good. Bless papa; bless my sisters, and all my kind friends. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, and bless me for Jesus's sake. Amen."

EVENING PRAYER.

“Our Father, who art in heaven, I thank Thee for Thy kind care of me all day in going out and in coming in. Thou has kept me from harm. I thank Thee for the good food I have had, and the kind friends who have provided for me, and taught me to love Thee. Forgive all I have done wrong ; if I have been cross, or selfish, or unkind, or disobedient, or spoken naughty words, O my Father, forgive me, because Jesus died that my sins may be forgiven. Watch over us all while we are asleep, and may we rise in the morning full of love to Thee. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, and help me to be like Jesus, for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

We now approach the last hours of her life, and we shall find that the same grace which developed her character in such lovely and beautiful proportions, was sufficient to sustain her in death. For three years previously she had been pronounced consumptive ; but no symptoms caused serious alarm till the month of November 1859. Even then it was hoped that entire rest and medicine would remove the threatened danger. They were tried, but in vain. During this period she did not appear, however, to suffer acute pain, and would have talked much had she not lost her voice, and been the subject of excessive languor and exhaustion. Such sentiments as the following

were, however, at intervals, given utterance to:—"As I look onwards all appears bright; but when I think of my dear little children left without a mother's care, it is dark indeed. They bind me to earth. I cannot yet say like Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace; ' but God will wean me from my idols before He takes me home." Again, in reply to a question she answered, "I am sure I am a sinner saved, for there is no 'condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.' To doubt my eternal safety would be to doubt God's declarations on every page of the Bible." On one occasion her husband was earnestly imploring her restoration. "Pray," said she, "that I may get well, but never in an unsubmissive spirit. It is hard to say to God, 'Thy will be done.' But do not extort my life by importunate prayer. He is wise, He is love, and 'though He slay me, yet will I put my trust in Him.'"

On Tuesday, the 7th of February, she appeared slightly worse, though there was nothing to indicate immediate departure. She passed a restless night, rose on the morning of the 8th somewhat earlier than usual, and without any help walked down to her sitting-room. The exertion seemed too much, and for the first time she was carried back to her bed. She rallied a little, and it was hoped life would still be continued, but at five in the evening it was evident death was approaching. Gathering up

all her remaining strength, she said, "Now, then, calmly and firmly for death. I have much to say, and my time is short." Some of her books and trinkets were distributed to her dearest friends. At her wish the servants were called. "Do not weep so," she said to one; "kiss not my hand, but my cheek. You have been to me not only a servant, but a friend." Then she added, "Oh, seek Jesus; seek Him now in health. There is no power to do so on a dying bed. Are you as near the kingdom of heaven as when you first entered this house? Strive after the salvation of your souls; it is the only thing worth living for."

Turning to her husband she said, "Give my love to the deacons at York Street, and thank them for their kindness. Give my love to the Sunday-school teachers. Tell them from me, 'Theirs is a noble work, and that he "who converteth a sinner from the error of his way saves a soul from death," &c.' Thank, too, all the people for their sympathy, and especially for their prayers." After a moment's rest, she continued, "And now, dearest, we, too, must part. I thank you for your attention and your love. You have been at times depressed in your work. Take it as my conviction—standing, as I do, in the light of eternity—God sent you to be a preacher of His Gospel. Preach Christ, and live Christ." With eyes full of tears, she then alluded to her little ones: "God, my dearest, will help you to bring them

up aright. Go and get those three Bibles I have bought for them." They were brought, when she dictated the following inscriptions:— "For dear little Paul, from his mother in glory; and she hopes that he will read a chapter every day, and do what God tells him." "For dear little Sissy, from her dear mother in glory; and she hopes that she will read a chapter every day, and submit her will to God's." "For my own little Netty, who will never know her mamma till she meets her in glory. Read a chapter every day." This done, she asked her husband to pray for them, and whilst he was doing so exclaimed, "Jesus, take them now to Thy love. Some children are converted early; may mine be suffered now to come to Thee." After an interval she again said, "I think I did rather too much at our bazaar for the organ. If any should blame you for letting me have my own way then, say we acted at the time for the best, and it was, therefore, a part of God's design. Self was a little too prominent; but I did seek God's glory. You will hear that organ next Sunday; but I shall have a golden harp, and hear many. Read to me the hymn beginning—

' Father, I know that all my life
Is ordered out by Thee;
And the changes that will surely end
I do not fear to see.'

Teach my children, as soon as they are old enough, to repeat it."

After dozing a little, she roused himself again and inquired, "Can this be death? I feel no particular pain, and no unusual or remarkable sensations. God has been good to me in not causing me more suffering. I am cold—that is all; but I am very peaceful. What is the time?" On being told, she replied, "I shall live till midnight's turned, and to-morrow, my dearest husband, is the 9th of February—your birthday—your birthday into time, mine into glory. I will give you a text to preach from the next time you appear at York Street. 'Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth.' Before you preach sing that hymn—

'Thine earthly Sabbaths, Lord, we love,
But there's a nobler rest above,' &c."

Again she said to her husband, "Talk to me at times when you are sitting at your study, or walking alone. My spirit will hover over you, and I may hear you, though unable to reply." Allusion was made to some dear relation whom she would soon meet above. "Yes," she said, "but Jesus is the great attraction of heaven. I shall now see His form, rest on His bosom, hear His voice." Just before her departure she was asked, "What now is your ground of hope?" She replied—

"' Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.' "

To the last her intellect was unimpaired. "Are you happy, even now?" said her husband, when the breathing indicated that she had but a few moments to live. "Yes." "Are you without any fear?" "Yes." "Is Jesus still a sufficient Saviour?" "Yes;" and then whispered, "*Pray.*" A short prayer was offered, and whilst her husband said for her, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," she ceased to breathe.

As, however, truthfulness is never more important than when depicting a death-bed scene, it is only right to add that one cloud did pass over her calm and holy soul. About four hours before her end she said to her husband, "What, now, if there be no hereafter, no God, no heaven, and all my religion is a delusion? What, if I am now about to be annihilated?" Reference was made in reply to the life of Jesus, and the whole tendency of His teachings, as opposed to falsehood and deception; and that He had said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and "In my Father's house are many mansions," &c. "Yes," she said, "I see it; it was only a momentary temptation of Satan." So the temptation passed; and ere four hours more had gone by, her spirit, too, was gone to her Saviour and her God—no longer to see through a glass darkly, but face to face—no longer to know in part, but to know even as she is known.

“ Dear as thou wert, and justly dear,
We will not weep for thee:
One thought shall check the starting tear,
It is, that thou art free;
And thus shall faith’s consoling power
The tears of love restrain,
Oh! who that saw thy parting hour
Could wish thee back again?

“ Triumphant in thy closing eye
The hope of glory shone;
Joy breathed in thine expiring sigh,
To think the fight was won.
Gently the passing spirit fled,
Sustained by grace divine,
Oh! may such grace on me be shed,
And make my end like thine.”

REVERENCE
FOR
THE SANCTUARY.

CHAPTER I.
(INTRODUCTORY.)

A SKETCH OF THE WORSHIP IN SOME OF OUR
MODERN SANCTUARIES.

REVERENCE for the sanctuary—is it a right thing? is it a duty? The question startles you, my friend. In some far-off isle, the word of God has reached you; you have read the wondrous story of His love, and it has been life to your soul. Reconciled to your Father who is in heaven, your spirit walks in loving fellowship with His. In prayer and with praise the labour of each day is begun, continued, and ended; each night you lie down to rest beneath the shadow of His wing; your cup runneth over with holy joy and exultation, and you long to share its overflowings with some kindred heart.

Sometimes inanimate nature responds to your call for companionship in praise. “The mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands.” Still you want fellowship with a human heart; the interchange of thought and sympathy with one

who, like you, has known the joy of pardoned sin ; who, like you, is struggling after growing conformity to his Father's image. You read that the early disciples of your Saviour continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising and blessing God, and breaking bread from house to house ; and oh ! how you envy that happy band of loving brethren. You hear that in a distant land, thousands and tens of thousands of Christians meet at stated times, especially on the day that commemorates their Lord's resurrection, to mingle together their joyous songs of praise, to acknowledge together how many things they have left undone which they ought to have done, and how many things they have done which they ought not to have done ; to pour out their hearts together before their common Father in fervent supplication for His blessing—for His blessing on their basket and their store, their country and their households, on their own spirits and on all the spirits that have received their life from Him. From your Bible you learn that God is ever present in these assemblies, bowing down His ear to hear their requests ; opening His hand to satisfy their desires, and listening with Divine joy to their notes of grateful adoration. As you hear of these happy gatherings, your heart is ready to burst with earnest longings that you might be one amongst those favoured thousands, and your eager emotions break forth in David's sorrowful lament after the sanctuary

—“O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh long-
eth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory, so as *others* see thee in the sanctuary. Oh that I might go with the multitude to the house of my God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that keep holy day.”

Your prayer is answered ; you are now in Christian England ; and as your first Sabbath draws near, the aspirations of solitary months and years grow in depth and intensity. The tumult of holy expectation is scarcely hushed to calm by the slumbers of the night. With what eager joy you hail the first streaks of that auspicious dawn. How gloriously rises that sun on the first day of your living association with Christian worshippers ; far more gloriously for you, even behind the blackened, crowded houses of the metropolis, than behind the wooded hills and ancient mountains of your native land, as it foreshadows to your heart the rising of the Sun of Righteousness on your soul, with more warmth and healing in his wings than you have ever yet known in the solitary communings of your own heart. The early hours of the Sabbath seem to pass but slowly ; at length the cheerful bell summons you to join the worshippers who are leaving their houses at its call. They do not assemble in such crowds as you expected, but eagerly you follow in their train, saying within you, “I was

glad when they said unto me, Let us go up to the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O church of the living God." Your vehemence leads you on, past group after group, and most eagerly do you listen for the words of sympathy you have so impatiently longed for. But what do you hear?—can it be true? Their converse is of last week's business, to-morrow's pleasure, some trifling incident, some little gossip, anything or everything save the holy thoughts and holy words which you hoped to hear from men who are preparing to meet their God. At length one solitary stranger, seemingly more devout than his companions, attracts your eye; you speak to him; your advances are not repelled, but encouraged; a few words of converse bring your spirit into fellowship with his; you begin to taste the longed-for happiness, and enter the sanctuary exulting in the tender mercy of God, who has granted your heart's desire.

The assembly is small; perhaps the minister is unpopular; you have heard that city congregations are fastidious. Soon the minister's voice calls you to "worship and bow down; to kneel before the Lord your maker." It may be that his devout soul breathes out its fervent longings for a blessing on the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer; or it may be that in a liturgy, sacred from its devout sentiments and its ancient associations, he invites you "to accompany him, with a pure heart

and humble voice, unto the Throne of the heavenly grace ; to acknowledge and confess your manifold sins and wickednesses before the face of Almighty God ; that you may obtain forgiveness of the same by His infinite goodness and mercy." At once your soul and all that is within you obeys the welcome summons ; your heart is overwhelmed with solemn awe and sacred joy, and you exclaim, "How dreadful is this place ; this is none other but the house of God, the very gate of heaven."

But suddenly you are brought down from the height of holy communion to which you had attained. A fellow-Christian wishes to pass beyond you to his accustomed seat ; and now the noise of footsteps, the opening and closing of doors, the rustling of silks, the arrangement of hats and umbrellas—these are the noises that jar upon your ear, attuned, as it was, to the harmony of God's praise ; these the sights which distract your eye, gazing as it was on the glories of that great God, "whose way is in the sanctuary." You are invited to *praise the Lord*. "Sing unto Him a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints." Joyfully you respond to the summons. But you are amazed, you are grieved unutterably ; around you are many silent, listless worshippers (say not worshippers, rather spectators of worship). Perhaps they have not so many blessings as you to call forth their praises. You have been forgiven much, therefore you love much ; and your

heart scarce waited for the bidding to break forth in words of loving gratitude. Again you unite in the *supplications* of the great assembly. How delightful to feel that hundreds of souls are breathing out the same petitions to the same Father, by the same Spirit (for by this time the sanctuary is comfortably full). Little do you know, my friend, that while your soul is wrapt in devout communion with God, many of your neighbours are gazing around them; many in the attitude of prayer whose hearts are in the counting-house, the nursery, the scenes of pleasure, or even the haunts of vice. Some are even daring to criticise the language of prayer in which the creature is addressing the Creator. But only a few, a very few, are using this gracious audience granted them by the Sovereign of the universe for their advantage and spiritual profit; and it is well you know it not, or the spirit of devotion might take its flight from your soul also, and you might become one of those formal, hypocritical worshippers, "who draw near to him with their mouth, while their heart is far from Him."

Now the *text* is announced, and the general attention seems somewhat quickened. Alas! the sermon is all that has brought some to the sanctuary; the sermon is all that they came to hear. Simply and powerfully the Word of God is expounded. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is the language of your heart; and often do you send up an earnest ejaculation

—“Lord, have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to keep this law.” The message which God has sent humbles you; for after all your agonizing efforts how far are you from the mark which God has set up, and to which you are pressing forward! Yet it cheers you; for your weak hands are strengthened, your feeble knees are confirmed, as you “remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.” You are reminded of His gracious love, you feast on His ample promises, and rejoice in His unswerving faithfulness. You leave the sanctuary as a giant refreshed with new wine, ready to “mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.”

You feel the yearning for human companionship return, you join the company of retiring worshippers, and you seek their sympathy in the quickened impulses of your heart’s holiest emotions. But what are the words which fall from their lips? One begins to converse on the talents of the minister; this you had not observed,—it was the voice of God to which you listened. You pass on to another. He would convince you of his own superiority by criticising with disapproval the style, the voice, the power of argument, or the oratory of God’s messenger. You marvel at his impiety, and pass on to a group in earnest conversation. For them the message itself was at fault; it was too practical, not so comforting, not so doctrinal, as they would have liked. You ask yourself, how

they have studied their Bibles, if they know not that comfort meets us only in the paths of holiness ; that all the truths, all the promises, yea, the sacrifice of God's own Son, are designed to bring back fallen man to that blessed path of holiness. You fear to lose your own profit by further converse with man, and so you hurry forward, that, in the secrecy of your own chamber, solemn converse with God may deepen the impression you received from the sanctuary services, and strengthen you to run the race newly set before you.

On your way, you see your old friend ; you will venture to join him. In his heart you may find sympathy ; by his words your sacred resolutions may be confirmed ; and you are not disappointed. Your hearts burn within you, as you talk together of the glorious truths and godlike precepts that have been your study in God's house. You have almost forgotten all that had pained you, but soon its sad memory is revived, as your hallowed intercourse is broken in upon by a new intruder. Your friend meets with one who is wont to be his fellow-worshipper in the sanctuary you have just left. He is full of excitement, for he returns from hearing one of the most popular preachers of the day. No holy influence seems to have come over the man's heart. You mourn that he leaves the house of God in much the same spirit as he might have left a scientific lecture or a musical concert,—pleased with the

performance, gratified with the interest or the entertainment of the passing hour, but neither humbled, strengthened, nor satisfied. The preacher was not to blame for this ; he aims at the spiritual profit of his congregation, and those among them who take heed how they hear find his ministrations full of holy edification. But a few words pass, ere you have detected why this man has not shared their blessings. He went there to satisfy curiosity, and his curiosity is satisfied. Had he gone to meet with God, he would have been satisfied also—but satisfied with God's favour, full of the blessing of the Lord. You grieve to hear, in further converse with your friend, that this man is but a type of hundreds of professing Christians who spend the holy day which God reserved for His service, and their profit, in hearing or seeing some new thing ; that every fresh place of pulpit-oratory, every peculiarity of doctrine, every novelty in worship, draws multitudes from the sanctuary where God has been accustomed to bless them ; that the heart of the pastor is discouraged, their own spiritual poverty engendered by their frequent wanderings, for that when they return to their more quiet assemblies, the stimulus of physical excitement is gone, and those raptures which they had mistaken for the joy of the Lord follow them not there. They mourn “ that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon them,” but little do they think that they have trifled

sway their mercies, by forsaking the still waters of the sanctuary, and going out into the wilderness, seeking to be refreshed by the impetuous, fitful winter torrent, or to charm their senses and gratify the taste with the roaring mighty cataract.

In bitter disappointment you exclaim, “ Is this all that Christians gain by the assembling of themselves together ?—let me then return to the solitude of my secret chamber, to that lonely recess in the dark pine forest of my island home, where Sabbath after Sabbath God’s Spirit has brought me into sacred fellowship with Him ; where I have learned so sweetly that God is not confined to temples made with hands, where no discordant sounds, no unseemly sights, have distracted my thoughts from communing with the Eternal, but all around has ministered to my devotions ; where at times my solitary sanctuary has seemed as resplendent with heaven’s glory, as was that of the lonely exile in Patmos. Oh ! never let me leave those blessed solitudes, if my spiritual tastes are to be vitiated, my soul’s holiest emotions stifled, my reverence for God depreciated, by association with those Christians in whose solemn worship and holy sympathies and brotherly love it has been for many long, long years the fondly cherished wish of my heart to share !

CHAPTER II.

REVERENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY PROVED TO BE A DUTY.

AND now, my reader, let me appeal to you ; is this an unfair, is it an exaggerated picture of some of the congregations of Christian England ? Far be it from me to become an accuser of the brethren, but there is an impression on many minds that the sanctuary is not reverenced as once it was ; that few, very few, enter on its services with that loving, filial awe which befits the presence of its glorious inhabitant ; that its ministers, its ordinances, its sacraments, have fallen into disrepute ; that sometimes even the semblance of respect is gone, and men think, and speak, and act, as though religion would flourish quite as well without this wise provision of God for making man's social nature subservient to His spiritual profit,—that other men can dare to behave as if the idle gossip, the clever joke, the irreverent laugh, were quite as appropriate in the sanctuary as in any other place of public resort. If your heavenly Father has associated you with a band of earnest worshippers, whose holy zeal quickens your sluggish soul, whose devout spirit and reverential habits rebuke your wandering thoughts, gratefully adore Him for such a goodly

heritage. "Truly the lines are fallen to you in pleasant places." Never may you have to mourn the deadening influence of other companionship in God's house ; for then, while all around conspired to extinguish it, you would find it a task more difficult than words can express to keep alive the sacred flame, which on the altar of your own heart you had kindled, in the secrecy of your chamber. Bear with me, then, while I reason with the man who habitually insults his Maker, by offering Him a worship which is a mere sham ; or the man who, casting off the very form of godliness, scarce takes the trouble to feign, in words or manner, the appearance of interest or devotion in the services of God's house.

My brother, I would reason with thee, if I might, even in God's stead. "Gird up now thy loins like a man ; I will demand of thee—answer thou me—What God is it that you worship ? Is it the God of the Bible ? With His high and awful nature you have been familiar from earliest infancy ; so familiar, that it has ceased to impress your heart, or fill your soul with a humble, holy dread of His terrible name. Let me, then, stir up your mind by way of remembrance, and do you see to it, that you are not deceiving yourself. It may be that the God whom you are mocking with this heartless worship is one devised and fashioned after thy own finite understanding, thy own degenerate heart ; altogether such an one as thyself. But behold, the God whom the Bible teaches us to

worship is great, and we know Him not, neither can the numbers of His years be searched out. Millions of ages before the morning stars began their concert of lofty praise, in His own eternal, uncreated self-existence, He dwelt alone. Millions of ages shall pass ; the worlds which He has created shall have vanished like a dream ; He will still be the great *I Am* ; the ages to come, like the ages that are gone, are His "*eternal now*."

And thou, my brother, what art thou ? A worm, "a shadow that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away ;" "grass which groweth up in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withereth."

The God whom the Bible teaches us to worship filleth heaven and earth. "If thou ascend into heaven, He is there ; if thou make thy bed in hell, behold He is there ; if thou take the wings of the morning, and flee to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall His hand lead thee, His right hand shall uphold thee." He knoweth all things, both in heaven and in earth. "The clouds He numbereth ;" the stars, those millions of millions of worlds of light, which the most powerful telescope cannot reveal to thine eye, "He calleth them all by their names." The hairs of thy head He numbereth ; thy steps He counteth. Not thou only, not the crowds of our metropolis only, not the nine hundred millions of our world only, but the sons of light that surround His throne above ; they, too,

who, having lost their first estate, are madly plotting vengeance against the King of heaven; and those myriads of creatures with whom He hath filled those other worlds, in those other systems (more countless far than the sand on the sea-shore) which bespangle the "firmament of His power." To the God of the Bible, the God whom we meet to worship, each of these His creatures can say, "Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off; Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways: for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether."

The God whom the Bible teaches us to worship, how shall we speak of His *wisdom*? "It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? it is deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" Try to grasp it in its infinitude, thou art baffled. Then go not beyond this world of ours.

Think of the beautiful variety of its plants and flowers, its creeping things and flying fowl, the living creatures that walk upon its surface or play in its mighty oceans; take the lowest type of each, and study the skill with which the only wise God has fitted it for its particular sphere. View the whole in their beautiful subordination to each other, and their harmonious working together for one common end. The mind is wearied. Then look to thyself, my brother, for thou art fearfully and won-

derfully made. Thy body, that wondrous casket fitted by Divine goodness for the enclosing of a rich jewel ; that temple made of dust, to lodge the viceroy of the world. Inquire diligently into the mechanism of one organ,—the eye, the ear, the hand, or foot. Consider its thousands of nerves, those telegraphic wires which convey the messages of its royal inmate to the remotest corner of his palace ; or the circulation of the life within its veins, or the wondrous contrivances for the constant renewal of its every particle. Years of study would not reveal to thee all the mysteries that are hidden in the beautiful organization of thine own body ; and then, if such be the casket, what is the jewel ? if such the palace, what is the king ? Into regions where his senses cannot reach man's reason leads him. Of the limits of time and space his imagination knows nothing ; far, far back into eternity, forward into the darkness of the future, it can penetrate ; it can ascend to the heights of heaven, or dive into the dread abyss ; rivers, oceans, deserts, mountains, intercept not its marvellous flight. As for his memory, the facts and experiences of all former ages, the discoveries of earth's mightiest intellects, the creations of earth's brightest geniuses, these it can store away in its ample cells. The right or the wrong of any action in the universe he can determine, if he will but see to it that his conscience is undarkened by ignorance, unprejudiced by self-love, unseared

by constant resistance, unsilenced by heedless indifference. His will, it is all but invincible. In heaven, or in earth, or in hell, there is one Being alone who can control it. Though God has created man with all this independence of will, though man is leagued in rebellion with creatures of greater power and mightier intellect than himself, yet does the Most High "work all things after the counsel of *His own will.*" The wrath of all His creatures He maketh to praise Him; the remainder of their wrath He doth restrain. Nay more, these very rebels He turns into friends; and so wisely doth He effect this, that instead of introducing contempt of His authority in other worlds, their pardon magnifies His holy law, and deepens their impression of His awful holiness and justice. "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" "Teach us what shall we say unto Him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. Shall it be told Him, that I speak? If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up."

Again, the God whom the Bible teaches us to worship—"power belongeth unto Him." He wills it, and from nothing thousands of worlds rush into being, and teem with life and happiness. He wills it, and they cease to exist. Moment by moment, they receive their being fresh from His hand, be it natural life only, or

the more subtle spiritual life, or the more glorious moral life. Let Him forget, or in anger withdraw for one moment His upholding hand, and, "like the baseless fabric of a vision," they shall vanish into the nonentity from which they sprang. "Lo, these are but parts of His ways. How little a portion is heard of Him; but the thunder of His power who can understand?"

Behold, a door is opened in heaven; as the sound of many waters, the songs of angels come rolling through the fields of space. Let us try and catch their strains, for it is our God they are worshipping. Perchance we may learn a lesson from them as to how He shall be worshipped. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Behold their posture; "each of them has six wings, with twain he covers his face, with twain he covers his feet," only twain are reserved for flight. For He whom they worship is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises. These very seraphims nearest to Himself in rank, and intellect, and purity, He chargeth with folly; their holiness is but finite. They can sin, for their fellows have done so. The heavens themselves are not clean in His sight, for they have looked upon the sin of man; and they must be purged with fire, as were the holy vessels of the sanctuary, which man's touch had defiled. His own beloved Son, who dwelt in His bosom from eternity, if He take upon Him man's sin, must be forsaken of His Father, and His mysterious

appeal to that Father's tender pity shall be checked by the remembrance. "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel!" "Exalt ye, then, the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy. Let the people tremble; He setteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. O Lord our God, Thou art a God that forgavest our iniquity, though Thou tookest vengeance on our inventions. Let them praise Thy great and terrible name, for it is holy. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for He is holy."

This is the God whom the Bible teaches us to worship. Sayest thou, "Fearfulness and trembling have taken hold upon me; His greatness terrifies me, my affrighted soul shall take refuge in His *goodness*?" Thou art right, my friend; 'tis a sanctuary where all thy grief shall be hushed to a heavenly calm; but ere thou enter, "take thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." "The Lord is good to all; His tender mercies are over all His works." He made His creatures, that they might be happy, and with a mother's watchful love He secures their happiness. But we rebels, whom He has reconciled to Himself, we learn His goodness in a wondrous history which aroused fresh interest in the choir of heavenly beings, who "for ages had been uttering the memories of His great goodness." Heaven could scarce contain their praises, when they

learned that no gift was too costly for that goodness to bestow on rebellious men ; and when they behold God's only begotten Son forsake His Father's bosom to dwell among those defiant traitors, they rush to earth likewise, that they may awake the sympathies of those whom that wondrous love most nearly concerns. On the plains of Bethlehem they begin the song to which, ever since that day, their harps have been most often attuned : " Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men." With intense eagerness they go on to learn that there is no depth of suffering or degradation to which this marvellous goodness refuses to stoop ; that not even the flaming sword of Heaven's justice turns it away from its purpose of restoring ruined humanity. And when they gladly welcome back the Conqueror who has led captivity captive, and returns to His Father to receive gifts for the rebellious, that God may dwell with them, a new era begins in the music of their heavenly home ; for all that they had known before of their mighty Sovereign's goodness seems swallowed up in this new song, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and blessing ; " and now, with renewed intensity, they set themselves to the study of this goodness in the future history of man. They see the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, counting no pains too great, no condescension too low, to woo back

man's rebel heart to Himself. He reasons, He remonstrates, He beseeches, He threatens, He chastises, and when the first tear of penitence trickles down the cheek, when the first desire has scarce formed itself into the resolve, "I will arise, and go to my Father, and saying unto him, I have sinned in thy sight," they see that tender, loving Father run and fall upon His prodigal neck, and kiss him, and joyfully they strike their golden harps in response to His exulting invitation, "Rejoice with me, for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found." My brother, despisest thou the riches of goodness like unto this ? Rather is there not a vastness in its breadth, an infinitude in its length, an awfulness in its depth, a sublimity in its height, which, more than His eternal self-existence, His wisdom, His power, or His holiness, moves thee to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling ? Yea, to tremble for all the goodness thy God hath shown thee.

When He would make this goodness pass before thee, and proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, say, wilt thou not entreat Him to condescend to thy weakness, to put thee in a cleft of the rock, and to cover thee with His hand, while he passeth by, for thou canst not see His face and live ?

Such is the God whom the Bible teaches us

to worship. Will ye bring to such a God the blind and the lame for an offering? Offer it unto thy earthly sovereign, if thou dost dare; but ere thou insult the God, in whose hand is the breath of thy nostrils, bethink thyself, will He be pleased with anything save the first fruits of thy heart's best affections, and the holocaust of thy soul's mightiest powers?

But *where* is this awful God to be worshipped? *When* is He to be worshipped? Anywhere, at any time; on the lovely mountain or on the shore of the boundless ocean, in the crowded market, in the secret chamber, beneath the noon-day sun and in the silent night-watches—a thought, a desire, a word of fervent supplication or grateful praise, is music in the ear of Him who invites His creatures to constant and loving fellowship with Himself. Nay, more, their business, their domestic duties, their lawful recreations; let them be done for His glory in a devout and reverent spirit, and they become acts of worship to Him who put holy Adam into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. Still, there have always been favoured spots in this vast world, where God has chosen more especially to meet with His creatures and receive their homage.

Do you ask why? He who made man knows what is in man, and he knows how much his mind, even in spiritual things, acts with a corporeal dependence. He knows too those subtle laws of association, which so powerfully affect man's

soul, and He knows therefore that places where man has once met with his God in solemn communion will ever after excite greater devotion in the discharge of worship than places of common use and everyday resort. His servant Jacob, after long absence from his godly father's house and long residence among the worshippers of false gods, required that the flame of his devotion should be rekindled, and his gratitude aroused, to the God "who had kept him on his way, given him bread to eat, and raiment to wear." And how does the only wise God effect this revival ? Not by recounting His own mercies, not by reminding Jacob of his broken vow ; one simple command does it all : " Arise, go to Bethel, and dwell there, and build there an altar unto God." Well he knew that the sight of the rude pillar of stones, which Jacob had left there, would bring to Jacob's recollection that memorable sunset which found him a lonely exile from his Father's house, that wondrous vision which refreshed his spirit while his weary body lay at rest. That it would reawaken the awe and reverential dread which drew from Jacob's lips the exclamation, " How dreadful is this place ; this is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven !" Aye, and Jacob's vow, how would that flash across his memory, and arouse his sleeping conscience to reproach him that in the hour of his prosperity God was not in all his thoughts. Jacob waited not for the sight of the pillar. Its very

remembrance stirred him to cleanse his household of all the strange gods that had crept in among them, to purify them, and to prepare them to meet with the God of Bethel. For reasons such as these God has ever desired to have places set apart for His special worship ; and has raised up the men, the talent, and the materials for their erection.

He redeems His chosen people from the hands of their enemies, and brings them through the wilderness, in a solitary way, to the land which he had prepared for them. By day and by night his pillar leads them forward, or gives the signal for their halting. But when he would receive their homage, it is not the fiery pillar that lighted their way in the darkness, nor yet the cloud that shaded them by day, for which He claims their grateful adoration and fervent prayers. No, God wills that a tabernacle should be erected by the Israelites themselves, and given by them to Himself, to be His dwelling-place. Nor is He careless as to how it shall be built, for He takes Moses into that mount "so terrible, that if a beast but touched it it was stoned, or thrust through with a dart." There He shows him a model of the tabernacle, and sends him back to the congregation, with a solemn charge: " See that thou make all things according to the pattern I showed thee in the mount." Further, the spirit of God deems it not unworthy of His greatness to fill Bezaleel and his co-workers

with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to devise curious works for this tabernacle; even the engraver, the embroiderer, the weaver, God's Spirit condescends to teach, so highly doth He value the minutest detail of His own dwelling-place.

Again, Israel is in possession of "the land flowing with milk and honey." God has freed it from the incursions of envious neighbours, and hath given them a king "after His own heart." This devout, loving shepherd-king cannot enjoy His own house of cedar while the ark of God remains in its wilderness dwelling-place, and he would build it a settled resting-place. David's zeal meets with God's approval, and brings God's blessing to his house, a blessing which the sins of successive kings wrested not from his family till it found its consummation in the person of David's Lord. But those hands which have shed much blood must not defile the dwelling-place of the Holy One of Israel. So God promises him a son, "who shall be a man of rest, and he shall build Me an house." Solomon's reign is peaceful and prosperous. The Queen of Sheba, Hiram, King of Tyre, all the kings of Arabia, with its merchantmen, and the governors of the country, the navy of Tarshish, the merchants of Egypt, the kings of the Hittites, the kings of Syria, all bring their wealth, their gold, and jewels, and costly stones, their hewed stone, their cedars, their almug trees, their ivory and linen yarn, for this

house of the Lord, which is to be exceedingly magnifical. God gives to Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand on the seashore, above all the wisdom of the children of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt, that he may design the plans, direct and govern the builders to undertake this mighty work, as if, to use the words of a quaint writer, "God had made it His business to build a Solomon, that Solomon may build the temple." But Israel sins, and Israel is sent to Babylon. After seventy years of captivity, God, being full of compassion, forgives their iniquity, and restores them to their land. The temple has been destroyed—where now shall they worship God? Where shall they praise His holy Name for this fresh deliverance? God had foreseen their emergency and made provision for it. Three hundred years before he had said of Cyrus, King of Persia, "He is my servant, and shall perform all thy pleasure." So He had said to the temple, "Thou shalt be built, and thy foundations shall be laid." Cyrus receives the charge from the King of Heaven, and sends as many of the Jews as desired it to go and rebuild their holy and beautiful house, "where their fathers worshipped."

For a time the work prospers; but the Jews too quickly yield to their adversaries, and supinely settle down without its completion. Not so does the God of the temple. He sends his

servant Haggai to rouse them from their sluggishness. "Is it time for you," saith he, "to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" Zerubbabel is stirred up and strengthened to resume the work, and from that day does God begin to bless them. At length the top stone is brought forth, and the temple is consecrated to God's service, amid the mingled tears and rejoicings of old and young. Again the temple must be built, or rather restored—the ambition, and policy, and pride of Herod become subservient to God's design, and forty years are spent in reviving as much of its ancient splendour as they could attain unto.

We see, then, that God has clearly revealed His will that certain buildings should be set apart for His service, and having chosen the places and recorded His name there, let us next inquire whether He sets any special value on those His dwelling-places. We think it very easy to prove that He does, from the *care with which He has guarded them from all that is profane and unholy*. He fenced them all around with laws and bye-laws, which to our eyes may seem ridiculously minute. But the Creator of man knew how much man needed all these laws to impress him with the greatness, and purity, and awfulness of the God that dwelt there. Its worshippers, even those who meet in the outer court alone, must be purified, and must absent themselves from the temple seven

days if they had defiled themselves by touching a dead body, or a grave, or the bone of a man. Its priests must have no blemish ; the lame, the blind, the defective, must not come nigh to the altar, "that they profane not My sanctuary, saith the Lord of Hosts." They were consecrated to their office by sacrifices and ceremonies, typifying their unfitness for God's service until they had been purged by blood ; they were then anointed with the holy oil, which "whoso compoundeth any like it, or whoso putteth it on a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people." They must not defile themselves for any, save their very nearest of kin ; and ere they entered the sanctuary they must "wash their flesh, and put on the holy linen garments." The very Levites, the menial servants of that sanctuary, must be cleansed by the same ceremonies ere they pass within its holy walls. As for the high priest, who alone might penetrate that awful shrine which hid, rather than revealed, the Deity that dwelt within, not for his own sons must he defile himself. And when, once a year, he might take that single footstep, forbidden to all besides, behind that mysterious veil, washed and cleansed in holy garments, he must enter with the blood of the sacrifice which he had offered, first for his own sins, then for the people. The cloud of incense must cover his face and his hands, and his feet, "that he die not." That very incense, so sacred that he who would imitate it must do so at the peril of his life—all

that was in that temple, its ark, its candlesticks, its snuffers, its vessels—are holy to the Lord. Even the censers of wicked men must not be turned to common uses. Once a year an atonement was made for the holy place, for the tabernacle, the altar of incense, because of “the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgression in all their sins.” That its sacrifices might be holy, the animals were divided into clean and unclean, and then the very best, the first fruits of the flock and of the herd, must alone be presented as offerings. Let the smallest of these ordinances be set at nought, and death was the only penalty that God considered commensurate with the crime. Say not, then, His chosen dwelling-place was not more highly esteemed by Him than other spots in this world of His.

We would further impress you with its sacredness by a brief history of the *judgments whereby He has revenged its profanation, or the profanation of aught that concerned it.* Aaron's sons, the future high priests of that sanctuary, offered strange incense on the altar, and the cloud above the mercy seat becomes an avenging fire, and rushes out to devour them. Three Levites, either presuming on their own dedication to the tabernacle service, or assuming that God's institution of the priesthood was unwise and unnecessary, speak lightly of His chosen servants. How terribly does the jealous God vindicate His own glory ! Read again with

new solemnity that awful scene; listen to the fearful challenge of Moses, the threatened destruction of the people who had not been long redeemed from bondage. Let imagination picture those three men, standing one moment, fearless and defiant, at the doors of their tents, with their wives and their little ones; the next moment themselves, their tents, their goods, their families, are gone. "The Lord hath made a new thing, and the earth hath opened her mouth and swallowed them up." Not yet is God's vengeance satisfied, for two hundred and fifty of the congregation have been partisans against the priesthood, and while the affrighted assembly flee before the anger of the great and terrible God, the fire of the Lord consumes those two hundred and fifty. Who that stood there with Moses and Aaron on that awful day would dare to speak lightly of one of God's ordinances?

How would the fathers warn their children, from the memory of its fearful scenes, not to call common or unholy that which God had set apart for his special service.

Years pass away; the Israelites are in trouble; their enemies prevail against them; they rethink themselves of the ark of the covenant; it is the symbol of God's presence among them; they will bring it to the camp; reverently they withdraw it from behind the veil; man's hand touches it not, for God hath provided against this profanation. Triumphant the priests bear

it into the midst of their dispirited army ; their confidence revives, the shouts of victory are anticipated, and the earth rings with their joyous acclamations. But the terror and dismay which strikes the hearts of the Philistines, when they learn that God is with Israel, serves only as a stimulus to their courage, and secures them an easy conquest. The ark of God is taken, its guardians are slain, and their good old father's heart is broken, for the glory is departed from Israel. Mistaken Israelites, the God of that ark would have made you more than conquerors had you sought Him in His own appointed way. Dispute His ordinances, choose for yourselves the channels through which His help shall come, intrude unbidden into His secret dwelling-place, and God Himself shall fight against you. Yet He ceased not to care for the ark of His covenant, and to vindicate its sanctity. It is brought to Ashdod, and set up in Dagon's temple, and Dagon falls and is broken before it. The people are smitten with the plague. From city to city they convey this holy thing ; but the plague follows it, and revenges its desecration. At length they call together a solemn council, and gladly send it away with costly trespass offerings (for they have learnt more quickly than the chosen people to dread the holy One of Israel). The men of Bethshemish as joyfully received it, but they are seized with vain curiosity, and 5070 are smitten for daring to look therein. Terror-stricken, they

send it to Kirjathgearim, where it remains until David, with 30,000 chosen men of Israel, bring it to Shiloh, with harp and psaltry, cornets and cymbals. But David neglects God's ordained way of transit ; the oxen which carry it shake the cart. Uzzah, from mistaken zeal, puts forth his hand to support the ark. "God smites him, and he died there by the ark."

Shishak, King of Egypt, took away the treasures of Solomon's temple, and Josephus tells us that calamities followed him to his grave.

Belshazzar, King of Babylon, gave a feast to a thousand of his nobles, and sent for the consecrated vessels which his father had brought from the same temple. But scarcely had the golden cups been lifted to their lips, when a handwriting from the Lord caused "the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to smite together." It told him that God had numbered his kingdom and finished it. That very night it was delivered unto the Medes and Persians, and Belshazzar was slain ; and wherefore ? Let God Himself reply. It is not always that He condescends to give a reason. "And thou, O Belshazzar, hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou and thy lords, and thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them."

Nor did the desecrators of the second temple escape the vengeance of God. Antiochus, after his return from Jerusalem, found all his designs

frustrated ; his officers were slain, and he himself died a miserable death. How did his conscience expound these judgments from the Lord ? " Now I remember," saith he, " the evils that I did at Jerusalem ; how I took the vessels of gold and silver. I perceive, therefore, that for this cause these evils are come upon me, and behold I perish for grief in a strange land."

Nicanor threatened to burn the temple. The Jews prayed to God against him, asking vengeance for no other sin than this. His great army was ruined. He was slain. His head and right hand were cut off, and hung up before Jerusalem.

Further, the temple which Herod built had become defiled through the covetousness of men, who, to change the Roman coin into the shekel of the sanctuary, and to sell sheep and oxen for the sacrifices, had turned its outer courts into a place of merchandise. God Himself appeared on earth to save and purify humanity, and what was His first public act ? To drive from His Father's house these sacrilegious extortioners ; " for," saith He, " My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations, but ye have made it a den of thieves." His last visit to Jerusalem witnessed the same purifying of God's temple, as though He would teach men that the revival of true religion must begin with the purifying of worship, because that brings them in closest contact with their God.

We can readily imagine that on some minds

any argument drawn from the sanctity of the Jewish temple, and all that belonged to it, *would have no force when transferred to our modern sanctuaries.* They would tell us that Christianity has revealed that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; that its great Founder taught “that neither in Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father,” for the only worship now acceptable is spiritual. But before you give to these words a meaning so literal, that to carry them out we must destroy all the churches and chapels of our land, and pray and praise in thought only, without using words or framing sentences, we ask you to follow us whilst we endeavour to prove that in worship, as in doctrine, Christianity is not a new thing on the earth, but only Judaism completed, refined, and spiritualised.

There is in divine revelation a gradual growth, suited to the gradual growth of humanity. New truths are revealed as the development of the species proceeds ; but never do we come to a point where one part of the Bible contradicts another. Let us illustrate this from everyday life. The student who has learned the rudiments of a science from an accurate teacher in his boyhood does not go to college that his knowledge of those rudiments may be eradicated. Some false inferences, which his ignorance and inexperience may have led him to draw from his elementary instruction, he may have to correct ; for “when he was a child he thought as a

child." He hopes to be led into larger and wider fields of knowledge, which shall fill his mind with growing wonder; but the first truths of that science remain firmly rooted in his conviction, more and more firmly as they are analysed, illustrated, and explained by his larger acquaintance with the heights and depths, and lengths and breadths, of the same. Just so is it with the religion of the Bible.

Let us, then, study the New Testament, with the doctrines, and histories, and laws, and ordinances of the Old Testament, in our thoughts and memories, and they will mutually strengthen, illustrate, and beautify each other. For example, apply this principle to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we shall better understand the Levitical economy than did the wisest and the holiest of the ancient Israelites. On the other hand, our knowledge of the Saviour's person, the Saviour's offices, and the Saviour's sacrificial work, would be far less complete, had not God inspired His servants to illustrate them by the rights and ceremonies which He had Himself ordained, as "shadows of those good things to come."

Apply the same principle to the picture worship, devised with so much care by the God of wisdom to instruct the childhood of humanity; and the awful sanctity of its shrine, the scrupulous purity of its priests, sacrifices, and worshippers, the laws and judgments against its profanation, shall teach us to serve the Lord

with fear, and keep our foot when we go into His house, and to be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools.

God has sent us a Teacher to instruct the world in its maturity. That Teacher removes the pictures (for we are no longer children), and we are expected to understand the great realities which they represented. Nor has He supplied the place of these pictures by any set ordinances or precise rules for the future worship of His Father. Principles He hath given us to be developed in practice, but, as in all the relations of man to his fellow-man, so in the public worship of his God, these principles are left to adapt themselves to every peculiarity and variety of age and nation; inasmuch as the gospel is for all the world, and God's revelation to man finds therein its glorious consummation. These principles, too, are only the development, and enlargement, and spirituality of those on which the patriarchs, and prophets, and spiritual Israelites were wont to worship God—the confession of sin, the need of substitution and sacrifice, the sprinkling of blood, the offerings of consecration and thanksgiving. Let us not, then, whilst we throw away the pictures and fables of our childhood, forget or ignore the lessons they were designed to teach us; for they are now more than ever binding on us, now that we have attained maturity, and can understand them, unlimited by the inefficiency

of material things fully to represent moral and spiritual truths.

For this cause we go further, and *claim for gospel worship and gospel sanctuaries greater reverence and higher love, than Solomon's Temple in all the glory of its sanctity, received from the most devout Jews.*

For these reasons we claim it.

1. *Because God's nature is more fully revealed there.*—The Scriptures which are read in our hearing every Sabbath day in God's house tell us more of His wisdom, power, and marvellous love, than did the laws and the prophets which were read in the synagogues of old. The truths which God commissions His servants to teach us there are deeper and higher, clearer and more sublime. Who, then, shall dare to say that a more intimate acquaintance with the Most High lessens our reverence for Him? As for the earth's great ones, their weaknesses and failings are known to their nearest associates only, therefore a prophet hath no honour in his own country and among his own kin. But we who are brought nigh unto God by the death of His Son, what is there in that grand scheme by which He hath reconciled us that would encourage undue familiarity? The Jew confessed his sin over the head of his sacrifice, and learned that the blood of that sacrifice must be shed ere his sin could be forgiven; shall we say that he had a deeper awe of God's holiness

than that thief on Calvary who beheld God's own Son making His own soul an offering for his crimes, or we, "among whom Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among us"? Let us go to Calvary when we would learn how to worship God; and as we stand by that holy hill and hear our divine Substitute cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," shall we not serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, as we exclaim, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy holy name, for Thy art holy?"

2. Gospel worship and sanctuaries demand greater reverence than the Jewish, *because the High Priest by whom we draw near is Divine*. Our Mediator is not a priest, weak and erring like ourselves, but God's own Son. The way of access He hath sprinkled, "not with the blood of rams and goats, but with His own blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Well might the apostle shudder when he asked, "Of how much sorcer punishment suppose you shall he be thought worthy, who hath counted the blood of our covenant an unholy [uncommon] thing?" If an Israelite dared to tread on the sacred threshold of the holy of holies, fire from the Lord would consume him, so holy was that threshold; then shall not the infinite worth of our consecrating blood, the Divine glory of our great High Priest, fill our hearts with humble awe as we draw near to the

mercy seat, above which dwells Deity in the grandeur of His holiness and love?

3. We claim for gospel worship and gospel sanctuaries greater reverence than for the Jewish, *because every worshipper is a priest*. No longer is the privilege of the priesthood restricted to a single family out of a single tribe, of a single nation, "but this honour have all God's saints." Every believer in Christ can bring his own thankoffering to the altar, can consecrate his own first-fruits or his own services, and can sprinkle his own conscience with the blood of atonement, asking for no human intervention in the worship of his Creator. Shall we, then, who are made kings and priests unto God, be less careful than were Aaron's family and Aaron's descendants, now we draw near to the God who exacted from them a purity so scrupulous and a demeanour so reverent? Shall we not rather take good heed to have our own "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, well-pleasing in His sight?

4. We claim for gospel sanctuaries and gospel worship greater reverence than for the Jewish, *because every place of worship is a holy of holies*. The promise, "there I will meet with thee and bless thee," is no longer restricted to a few square yards, enclosed by divine command out of a chosen temple, in a chosen city, but is

graciously extended to an upper room, a plain meeting-house, a gorgeous cathedral, a heaven-roofed sanctuary, to any place “where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ.” God is there, and shall the presence of God hallow the holy of holies with a sanctity too awful to be gazed upon, and leave those other favoured spots, which are equally the audience-chambers of the Most High, so common, so profane, that we shall enter them with as little veneration for their sacred walls and their sacred ordinances as we enter our counting-houses, our family-dwellings, our scenes of pleasure and amusement? Rather shall we not worship God in those sanctuaries—not with the reverence of the crowd, who in solemn silence waited outside the first veil of the temple while the priests entered within to sacrifice ; nor yet with the reverence of those priests who, daily in their course, burnt incense on the altar of the holy place—but our emotions, shall they not be those of the high priest when, once a year, with trembling hand and awe-stricken soul, he drew aside the veil, and reverently, most reverently, with fearful step, trod on the sacred floor of the holies, carefully covering his polluted person with the smoke of the holy incense, “lest he die;” scarce daring to lift his eyes to gaze on that cloud above the mercy seat, before whose presence the golden cherubim bowed their heads? Nay, deeper reverence be ours, for not in a cloudy symbol does Jehovah reveal Himself in

our holy of holies, but heart to heart, spirit to spirit, does the living God bring Himself into living contact with His worshipping people—"He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And our God—not the God of the Jews, not God out of Christ; no, the Christian's God, God in Christ—"our God is a consuming fire."

Lo ! God is here ; let us adore,
 And own how dreadful is this place !
 Let all within us feel His power,
 And silent bow before His face ;
 Who know His power, His grace who prove,
 Serve Him with awe, with reverence love.

Lo ! God is here ; Him day and night
 The united choirs of angels sing ;
 To Him, enthroned above all height,
 Heaven's host their noblest praises bring :
 Disdain not, Lord, our meander song,
 Who praise Thee with a stammering tongue.

Being of beings ! may our praise
 Thy courts with grateful fragrance fill ;
 Still may we stand before Thy face,
 Still hear and do Thy sovereign will :
 To Thee may all our thoughts arise,
 Ceaseless, accepted sacrifice.

CHAPTER III.

ON LATE ATTENDANCE AT GOD'S HOUSE.

If we have successfully proved that the God whom we worship is worthy of all reverence—that He chooses to have certain places dedicated to His special service—that He guards the sanctity of these places by righteous laws and fearful judgments—and that Christian sanctuaries demand greater reverence than the Jewish—we ask you next to consider one breach of this reverence which is sadly prevalent in some of our congregations, prevalent not because men can allege one argument in its defence, but just because they have never seriously thought about it, never devoutly questioned conscience, “Am I right or wrong in giving way to this habit?” They have carelessly suffered domestic duties, business engagements, or even thoughtlessness about the time of leaving home, to encroach upon their early attendance at God’s house, until our sanctuaries, some of them, at least, present a sight truly painful to the heart of every tender, loving Christian, “who loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”

We might show you that this want of punc-

tuality in God's service *indicates a low state of piety*. A man hungering and thirsting after righteousness, whose heart overflows with grateful adoration and love, will scarce wait for the summons, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." He would be the first to rouse his dilatory neighbours with the joyous call, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms."

We would, however, rather take positive than negative ground, and endeavour to show you that this breach of decorum in the sanctuary, this late attendance at God's house is *a sin against God's law*—not against one precept of that law, for He hath never enjoined that on a certain hour we shall leave our houses and assemble to worship Him—but it is *a sin against the spirit of the whole law*, against the first great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." And against the second, "The second, which is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

We say it is *a breach of the first commandment*, for whom we love we delight to honour, and one reason among others for the united public worship of God is that, by observing those set times and set places for seeking His face, we openly testify our homage to His greatness, as

it could be done in no other way. If we have a favour to ask of one of earth's magnates, we do more honour to him by waiting upon him at his residence than by asking him to call at ours. But should this great man deign to place himself at our command, by suffering us to name the hour which best accommodated itself to our engagements, what an insult it would be to his rank, his condescension, and his goodness, if we took little or no pains to arrive at the precise moment he expected us! Nor would the insult be less flagrant if we were but one among a hundred petitioners, who had, by this great man's permission, agreed to meet at a certain hour, fixed on by general consent as the most convenient for all. Yet to how many in our sanctuaries, if the King of kings would be gracious, He must "wait to be gracious." How few, alas! how few are the praises that wait for the God of Zion in modern churches! My brother, "these things ought not to be." If a herald from your earthly sovereign announced her gracious pleasure to receive you on her next day of public audience, you who are generally three, five, or even ten minutes behind the time, when the King of kings sends you such a summons, would you not be found in the long train of eager expectants, who for hours await their turn to enter His royal presence, and there patiently endure a crowd and turmoil which would almost deter you from attempting the public worship of God? Say not,

should your whole household be aroused earlier than they please, lest your worldly business should suffer by delay; but that it is of little consequence if your soul only suffer loss by the want of equal care and attention on the Sabbath? Wonder not if your children interpret your heart's inmost feelings by your life, rather than by your words, and scarcely give you credit for the sincerity which moves you to instruct, admonish, and beseech them to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Wonder not if the thought of their heart is this—"My father does *not* consider God's business more important than his own. My mother does not find, 'Tis religion that can give sweetest pleasure while we live.'" Why do you take those children to the sanctuary? Is it not in the earnest hope that the ministrations of your beloved pastor may, by God's blessing, result in their salvation unto life? Well, supposing he were not God's messenger, as he is; supposing he stood there in his own name only (this is the light in which your children probably regard him); then the dishonour done to God by your late attendance would be an insult to your pastor only. But is it wise in a Christian parent to weaken the influence of him through whose agency they hope for blessings so fearfully momentous in their issue, by a want of respect, of which a rightly constituted mind would not suffer his children to be guilty towards a secular teacher? Oh, my friends, if the souls

of your children are, indeed, more valued by you than their poor, frail, mortal bodies ; if your heart's desire is, indeed, that they should share a joyful eternity with you, rather than that they should be wise or great for a few fleeting years of vanity ; we beseech you, on their behalf, to see to it that, come what may to hinder, cost you what sacrifice it may, your resolve shall be, as "for me and my house, we will enter the sanctuary with early feet."

Your late attendance at God's house is a breach of the love which you owe to your minister. Try to put yourself into his place for one Sabbath. Many weary hours has he spent in studying what he shall say, and how he shall say it, so that the people of his flock may be instructed and impressed. Often did he throw down his pen and look up to God for wisdom. "Teach me, O Lord, that I may teach others," were the words wrung from his heart by the consciousness of his own weakness and ignorance. Now that portion of his work is done, and with equal diligence and intensity he seeks that moral preparation, that devotion of heart, which can alone enable him so to preach as to save the souls of his hearers. And then he wends his way to the sanctuary, overwhelmed with a sense of his awful responsibility, oppressed with a burning anxiety for the recovery of the wanderers, and the increasing holiness of the safely folded sheep of his pasture. He enters the pulpit, and his holy ardour receives a sudden chill ;

your fellow-worshippers by your late attendance at God's house, because that which weakens the ministry must necessarily tend to the loss of the hearer. But the injury goes deeper than this, it touches his fellowship with God. You remember a stranger being brought into your pew a few weeks ago, whose light and irreverent conduct painfully convinced you that he was ignorant of the God whom you had come to worship. During the prayer he was staring around him ; whilst others sang God's praises, he was mentally, or in a constant whisper to his companion (if he had one), criticising their faces, their dresses, their general appearance, or watching for some incident which might excite a laugh. The sermon awakened no interest in his heart, for it was clear he had entered the sanctuary with any motive rather than the desire to be instructed or impressed. Your own devotion languished under the shadow of his irreverence, and you grieved to see the contagion of his indifference stealing over your sons and daughters. How you trembled lest their respect for God's sanctuary, and their awe of His holy Name, should suffer by contact with that thoughtless, profane, irreligious man. How earnestly you longed that when next the privacy of your family pew is to be invaded it might be by some such worshipper as that good man who, on the previous Sabbath, manifested his devout and holy frame of mind by his grave and earnest bearing, his fixed, eager eye, and his

hearty participation in the prayers and praises of the great congregation. These quickened your own soul to greater devotion and more lively interest in the services, which, therefore, seemed to you more than ordinarily pleasant and profitable. But you are not aware that just the same effect which the indifference of that thoughtless trifler produced in your spirit is mourned over, Sabbath after Sabbath, by your more godly neighbour in the next pew, as the result of your late attendance at God's house. His conscience is tender, and he would rather lose a large sum of money by want of punctuality in a business appointment than rob God of one tittle of the honour due to His Name. But your entrance into the sanctuary after the service has commenced, the arrangements you must make, the handing about of books, the settling down to worship, these deprive him of much of that preparation of heart which he had gained by the five minutes spent in quiet, thoughtful recollection before the service, when he had gathered up all the powers of his soul, driving away, by God's help, all distracting influences, and bringing into his heart the mighty strength of God's own spirit for the solemn duty of communion with Him. If you care not to secure for yourself all the profit which this quiet pause might bring, oh! do not rob that holy man of what so nearly concerns his happiness and his close walking with God amid the turmoil of next week's business, for which he is seeking devoutly to

strengthen himself on the day which God hath blessed.

Shall we descend from the high ground which we have taken to urge upon you this duty, on the ground of *self-interest*? Shall we appeal to other motives than those which the Christian professes to be the mainspring of all his actions—"Glory to God in the highest and good-will to man?" Yes, we have God's own example for condescending to appeal to that self-love which He Himself placed in man's heart, that it might ensure His spiritual profit.

We tell you that you *injure your own soul* by your want of punctuality in attending God's house. If it be true that he who despises God shall be lightly esteemed, and you habitually and publicly dishonour Him—if it be true that "with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again," and you habitually injure your own family, your minister, your fellow-worshippers—and if it be true that "for all things" which you require, "God will be inquired of to do it for you," and you habitually shorten your prayers by late attendance, and take the soul of devotion from them by the want of even thoughtful preparation, which an extra five minutes would ensure—who shall say how much of that apathy to spiritual things which you earnestly deplore, that worldliness of spirit which in your closet you devoutly struggle against, that leanness of soul which sincerely distresses you, more than your want of prosperity in busi-

ness ; who shall say how much of these may be attributed to this one sin ? And yet how easily a little forethought, a determined resolve, a strong, earnest will, might make it the habit of your life to be among the earliest as now you are among the latest worshippers in the sanctuary !

It seems almost too small a trifle for so many words, and yet too great a sin against the spirit of Christian love and gratitude to require them. Try, my brother; prove God by honouring Him with the first-fruits of your time ; show to others that you count His service your true delight ; carefully cultivate the spirit of true devotion in His sanctuary, and prove Him now here-with whether He will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out upon you a blessing so large that your own heart cannot hold it, but its overflowings shall bless your family, your minister, the congregation with whom you worship, and the neighbourhood in which you dwell. Then, as it returns in measure more abundant to your own soul than you can conceive, you shall exclaim, in wondering admiration, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts ! Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, they shall be still praising Thee. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For they that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of God. They

shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing. To show that the Lord is upright. He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CAUSES THAT HAVE PRODUCED IRREVERENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY, AND THEIR REMEDIES.

Now comes the question—Whence has arisen that disrespect for God's sanctuary, of which the present generation of Christians are accused? If He is so great and terrible a God—if He hath set apart places for His special worship—if He hath fenced them round by holy laws and awful penalties—if He hath fearfully revenged their profanation—if Christian sanctuaries are more holy than the Jewish—how comes it that men, calling themselves Christians, think lightly, speak lightly, act lightly, by the dwelling-place of the Most High?

Some would tell us this a sin of our generation only; but they are wrong. Let them study the history of the Church, and they will find that, whenever true religion has begun to decline, that decline has first manifested itself at God's house. Either reverence has degenerated into superstition, or the spirit of the age, scorning to clothe itself in words and deeds befitting those only whose hearts are penetrated with real, living, earnest fear of God, has fearlessly and truthfully thrown off what had become a

mere form and solemn mockery, and openly despised the sacraments, the ordinances, the obligations, and the privileges of God's sanctuary.

We might content ourselves with this reply to the question: We might say men reverence not God's house because their spiritual eye is diseased, and they no longer discern God's presence there; their spiritual appetite is depraved, and they loathe the bread with which God feeds them there; their spiritual hearing has become obtuse, and the harmonies of God's sanctuary fall discordant on their ear. All this is true, but we think it is not the whole truth. We believe there are reasons why the decay of spiritual strength takes this special form; we suppose that there are errors of the judgment as well as errors of the heart, and to a few of these errors which seemed to have lessened man's reverence for the sanctuary we ask your serious, thoughtful consideration, hoping that the discovery of the evil in each case may suggest its appropriate remedy, and that we may be restored to a more healthy, vigorous, earnest appreciation of the sanctuary, with its privileges, obligations, and blessings.

We think that false deductions are made from the purely spiritual nature of gospel worship, and its freedom from imposing rites and ceremonies. The spirituality of God's nature is the foundation of the change from the carnal ordinances of the Jewish to the simple worship of the Christian sanctuary; but we must be babes

indeed, nay, devoid even of the feeble life and consciousness of infancy, if the shadow of good things to come fill us with more reverence than the substance of those good things; if the picture of a glorious region of mountain and flood, smiling valleys and sunny brooks, strikes our eye with a rapture which the landscape itself fails to call forth.

Not so the Apostle Paul. To him the former dispensation "had no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth." And yet he seemed to have had a presentiment that the removing of those carnal ordinances might imperil the reverence of his Hebrew brethren for the worship of an unseen, spiritual God. It might be that there were brief intervals in his own heart's history when his spiritual vision became obscured; then his Jewish soul would somewhat sympathise with his brother after the flesh, as, contrasting the gorgeous ritual of the temple with the simple prayers and humble praises of a few poor, illiterate men and women, gathered in an upper room, he might scornfully exclaim, "Is this all that you offer me in exchange for those glorious, awe-inspiring services, which you say are decaying and waxing old, and ready to vanish away? Surely this is not worship befitting the Lord of Hosts, the great and terrible King of Israel? Without form or comeliness, there is no beauty, that I should desire it." And with affection far stronger from the effort to loosen its grasp, he would cling to the imposing ceremonies and

costly sacrifices with which his fathers had worshipped, and which had drawn forth the wondering awe of his boyhood and his riper years. This misconception Paul set himself most diligently to remove, and how ably he performed his task let the Epistle to the Hebrews testify. Rather let us say that He who inspired the apostle, looking down the long vista of future ages, saw all the dangers to which His Church would be exposed, all the errors, doctrinal and practical, into which they would be prone to fall, and provided against them all. He saw how the worship of an unseen God, in forms simple and devoid of pomp, might degenerate into irreverence, and selecting the people through whom He had taught the world all that He had revealed concerning Himself, He prompted His servant to write to them an epistle, "which should be for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Let us follow the argument of this epistle if we would fortify our minds against this decay of due reverence for the sanctuary.

Before "the High Priest of our profession," in all the sanctity of His human, and in all the glory of His divine, nature, bringing "once for all" His sacrifice of worth unspeakable to the altar of the true sanctuary, "then sitting down at the right hand of the Most High," "ever living to make intercession" for those for whom He had obtained eternal redemption—the Jewish high priest, compassed with infirmity, "not suffered to continue by reason of death," daily

offering first for His own sins, then for the people, "sacrifices which could never take away sin;"—dwindles into utter insignificance.

The spiritual vision of the apostle, becomes more than usually intensified as he considers the apostle and high priest of our profession, until at last a glorious panorama unveils itself to his enraptured eye. "The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," with its light like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal, its high wall of jasper, garnished with all manner of precious stones, its streets of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, its twelve gates, each several gate of one pearl, with angel porters, who are never commissioned to close those gates, day nor night—is present to the apostle's eye. No night indeed can that glorious city ever know, for on its throne of jasper there sitteth "the Judge of all, and His glory brightens it so that it hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon." Around that throne the apostle beheld "an innumerable company of angels," ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; "the church of the first-born," the patriarchs, the prophets, the martyrs, the holy men of old, the spirits of just men made perfect—a multitude which no man could number, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. "*To this city ye are come,*" saith Paul, "this is the God ye worship, these are your fellow-worshippers." But how shall we draw near that awful presence? Is there no medium to soften

down the glory of that light inaccessible, which no man can approach unto ? no daysman that might lay his hands on us both—that glorious God and these poor sinful creatures ? Yes ; there, before the throne, stands Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, clothed with a garment down to the foot ; " His head and His hair white like wool, as white as snow ; His eyes as a flame of fire ; His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace ; His voice as the sound of many waters ; out of His mouth a two-edged sword, and his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength." Who could marvel if this apostle, like his brother in Patmos, had fallen at His feet " as one dead," if the blood of sprinkling alone, touching his polluted conscience, reviving his fainting heart, could restore him to his accustomed child-like confidence in God ? Who marvels that, with fear and trembling, with holy, humble awe of God's excellence, he appeals to his brother-worshippers, " Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire " ?

But he sees dangers threaten the sanctuary from another side. The gentiles had not been taught to reverence their gods at all. Their anger they had deprecated, their favour they had propitiated, but no reverence did those idols of wood and stone, the work of men's hands, ever inspire in the hearts and consciences of their worshippers. No love to their temples had they, except as they might become the

scenes of their own feasting and debaucheries.

While, on the one hand, Paul warns the Galatians against being led back by designing men to the "beggarly elements" of Jewish worship, "whereunto they desired again to be in bondage," on the other hand, yet more strenuously, with the stern rebuke of watchful love, he denounces the profane irreverence of the Corinthian brethren, in whose hearts and minds the fear of the living God had a long and hard struggle against the more deeply rooted principles of heathenism. He tells them that for this cause—that they had "despised the Church of God and turned His ordinance into an occasion of feasting and drunkenness"—for this cause God had sent among them a disease which had hurried some to an untimely grave, and had smitten many with infirmity and sickness. And then he gives them sundry rules for the more decent and orderly conduct of God's worship, descending to matters so minute as the covering or uncovering of the head, and arranging for the seemly exercise of their marvellous gift of tongues and its subservience to the profit and not the mystifying of their assemblies. So carefully did the inspired apostle guard the sanctity of God's house and God's ordinances.

It may be that in our minds there is no theoretic mistake about the spirituality of God's worship, no false inference drawn from that spirituality, but that the faculty for discerning

and appreciating spiritual objects lost by Adam's fall, quickened into fresh life by the Holy Spirit in every true believer, is but partially restored, and subject to frequent returns of torpor ; from these we therefore need most vigorously to shake ourselves, when we would enter into communion with the otherwise invisible God. Let us, then, carefully seek, before we enter His sanctuary, to fill our minds with a due sense of the majesty of the God we are going to worship there. If the vastness of a comprehensive view of that majesty make its detail too insignificant a duty to impress our hearts, it might be well to select one attribute each Sabbath—His wisdom, or His power, or His goodness, His holiness, His justice—and let that be the subject of our meditation or converse on our way to His house. Let the thoughts be exercised in remembering and recording any new illustration of that attribute which may have struck our minds during the week. Then, while we "enter into His courts with thanksgiving and His gates with praise," we shall so enter, so sing, so pray, so hear, as they who feel that "God is great and greatly to be praised, to be had in reverence of all that are about Him."

The ease with which gospel worship is practised may tend to depreciate its value in our eyes. That which is difficult of attainment, we well know, is most highly prized. The Jew who, however distant from Jerusalem, must, three times a year, leave his family, his land, his mer-

chandise, to the protection of his Heavenly Father, and take a long and toilsome journey to the temple, to share in its holy festivals, was not likely to deprecate that service which cost him so large a sacrifice of time and labour; whilst we, unthankful for the mercy that has made our sanctuaries so easy of access, value its privileges less for their very commonness. Truly this is in keeping with our light estimate of all our Father's common blessings—the air that we breathe, the bread and the water that sustain our life, the health which we often learn to value rightly only by its loss. An eloquent preacher* of our own day has suggested a fitting remedy for this indifference:—"Let those of us who are able to frequent the house of God not forget the assembling of ourselves together. Reader, the day must shortly arrive, perhaps to some it has already arrived, when you shall have worshipped your last in the great congregation. And when that Sabbath comes in which you can go thither no longer—when, in their Sunday's attire, the rest of that household have quitted you, and the bells have fallen silent—and from some neighbouring sanctuary the organic swell or voice of psalms has announced the commencement of the worship, and you know that all the Christianity of the kingdom is now assembled for social prayer and praise—may you not wish that, when

* Mr. Hamilton's 'Lessons from the Great Biography':

your faculties were fresh, and before the grasshopper became a burden, you had hearkened more alertly to the words of life, and taken home more personally and practically the truth which is in Jesus? And, amidst all the motives to strenuous devotion and earnest hearing, would it not be well to bear in mind such days of darkness, and now be laying up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come? Would it not be well in imagination to change places sometimes with the mournful prisoner whose pew is this day vacant, or with the joyful convalescent who regards it as the crowning mercy of his restoration, that once more it is said, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.' "

If we study the history of the Church, we shall find a third reason why this irreverence for God's sanctuary has been suffered to creep in: *the reaction from superstition and lifeless forms and ceremonies.*

There have been periods when the reverence of men has been transferred from the truth itself, or the worship itself, to the outward forms which represented them. The churches, the priests, the relics of good men, the image of our Lord's cross, have received the homage due to the God of those churches, the piety of those good men, the Saviour crucified on that cross.

From the reign of superstitions like these there have been powerful awakenings. Holy men, jealous for God's glory, have torn away

those idols which were drawing away men's hearts from Him, whilst all the time they were mistaking that idolatry for acceptable worship. Perhaps these holy men, in their righteous indignation, sometimes forgot that "the man whose superstitious zeal is justly opposed feels himself injured in that which, in his mind, is associated with the sacred feelings of devotion." At any rate, their followers, too many of them inflamed with an equally holy zeal, may not have had the refinement of intellect which could discern between the sanctity of the temple and the profanity of the idol, which could decide where superstition ended and irreverence began. Others of their helpers "cared for none of these things," but joined their ranks only with the desire to revenge on the priesthood, who had so long held Christendom in irksome thraldom. They eagerly ravaged the churches, broke the idols, destroyed the altars, pillaged the monasteries, from worldly motives only. No reverence had they for the God who had been ignorantly worshipped in those temples, and it was but natural that the contagion of their profane, irreligious spirit should spread among those faithful followers of Christ whose indignation had at first been fired by love to His honour.

Indeed, so prone is man to rush from one extreme to its opposite, that, viewed in one light, the history of the world seems only a history of reactions. Rarely, very rarely, has the Church hit upon that slender line which sepa-

rates between superstition and irreverence. The bowings and the crossings which mimicked devotion are set aside; for a time the worship is real and spiritual, but soon loses its life and vigour. And then, the form having been abolished, even the appearance of devotion is gone, and careless irreverence takes its place.

Let us not consider it a matter of small moment in what posture, or with what words, or in what building, we meet to worship God; for all these things influence our senses, and through our senses act upon our hearts. While we do not advocate the multiplication of rites and ceremonies which the history of the Jewish and Romish Churches has proved to be inefficient to preserve true reverence for God, far less do we advocate that carelessness about these smaller matters which indicates a heart but little penetrated with solemn awe of the God they worship.

That which Calvin says on kneeling in public worship may be wisely said on various other regulations for the right discharge of that worship. "If it be asked whether this be a human tradition, which any man may refuse or neglect at pleasure, I answer it is so human as to be also divine. It is of God, as it is part of that decency commended by the apostle (1 Cor. xiv, 40). But it is of man, as it particularly points out and specifies what the Scripture only declares in general."

If we be not wise or good above those holy reformers, let us, like them, avail ourselves of

all the outward helps to devout and reverent exercise of worship which they found necessary ; carefully watching lest, losing the spirit which animated them, we should be found contenting ourselves with the lifeless form, the bare skeleton, of living truths, living doctrines, and living sentiments.

Another cause for the want of reverence of the sanctuary in our own day, we think, is the *undue pressure of business* on the time and energies of professing Christians and others. Our godly forefathers could find time for daily services ; twice a day some of the Reformers were accustomed to meet for public worship, while few of us can spare an hour between successive Sabbaths for social fellowship with God. On the Saturday evening, secular engagements could be in a measure laid aside by them, that they may rub off the worldliness which the week's engagements might have engendered, and seek a state of heart prepared for the engagements of the holy morrow. Alas ! how few are the households who could assemble now and sing together that sweet Saturday evening's hymn—

“ Safely through another week,
God has brought us on our way ;
Let us now a blessing seek,
On the approaching Sabbath day.
Day of all the week the best,
Emblem of eternal rest.

“ Mercies multiplied each hour,
 Gracious Lord ! our praise demand ;
 Guarded by Thy mighty power,
 Nourished by Thy gracious hand.
 Now from wordly care set free,
 May we rest this night with Thee.

“ When the morn shall bid us rise,
 May we feel Thy presence near ;
 May Thy glory meet our eyes,
 When we in Thy house appear ;
 And may all our Sabbaths prove
 Foretastes of eternal love.”

Close upon the Sabbath dawn, the father of many of these families retires to sleep weary and care-worn, longing for the Sabbath rest, not because he thirsts for the delights of social fellowship with God, but because his jaded mind and wearied limbs will not then be tasked to run in that remorseless race for gain which covetousness demands of her unhappy slaves. And the Sabbath is a day of rest for him, but not such rest as God designed ; shortened by necessity in the morning, for the father cannot begin the morning meal at his usual hour ; shortened in the evening, for his drowsy eyelids and his overstrained mental powers alike refuse to reap profit from the perusal of God’s holy word or any other edifying, instructive book. Ask the man what he has gained by that blessed day, which was meant to be the “ best of all the seven ? ” He will tell you—*rest*. I am ready to begin work on Monday with invigorated body

and refreshed mind. And this is all; God's own primitive ordinance, the only one known within the holy gates of paradise, has become subordinate to man's worldly gain.

This man we commiserate; fain would he have it otherwise, but he cannot. It is not riches, but a bare subsistence, that he seeks for his wife and his little ones; but such is the state of Christian England in the nineteenth century, so little have Christ's unselfish principles leavened the business and checked unfair and grasping competition, that if he would feed his family he must starve his own soul, by giving up virtually, if not nominally, the day which the Father of mankind set apart for nourishing His children with "the bread which came down from heaven." And his family share in the loss. Oh, how differently would they value the services of the sanctuary if their father could calmly, without hurry, call them together on the Sabbath morning to seek God's blessings on its services; reverently lead them to God's house, and cheerfully converse with them on its holy engagements; use the intervals of worship for their profit and pleasure; and then joyfully accompany them in the evening to the sanctuary which he had taught them to love. If his heart were filled with the gladness of those services, "like the precious ointment that run down upon Aaron's beard," it would flow down to the very skirts of his garments, and the very least

of his little ones would have his share of this holy anointing of God's Spirit.

For this he used to long, this is the sweet picture of Sabbath blessedness which his imagination delighted to sketch, before his heart had become hardened by unceasing contact with the world, and his soul corroded with the cares of this poor, perishing earth, which scarce yields them the necessities of existence.

Other professors there are whose sin lies at their own door. They will be rich, cost what it may of needful relaxation from business, of domestic comfort, or even of spiritual joy. And truly they have "fallen into a snare. Led captive by the god of this world," their cruel tyrant allows not one moment's respite from his Herculean task. What is the Sabbath, with its blessed services, to them? Scarcely do they obtain the physical rest which their clerks and journeymen enjoy. True, their counting-houses are closed, but their minds become the arena of business; their ledgers are locked safely in the desk, but so firmly are its calculations rooted in their minds, that all the lofty sanctities and glorious truths of God's house fail to find a lodgment in their crowded hearts. "How shall I meet that bill which this week becomes due? Let me reckon once again my chances of success in this enterprise; for if it fails, I am a ruined man. How can I enlarge my business, so as to meet my increasing expenditure?" Are not these the only response which your heart

gives to the prayers and praises of the great congregation, to the appeals and instructions of its earnest minister, my poor, ensnared, captive, unhappy brother? You insult God, not by bringing to Him for sacrifice the blind and the lame which he spurned from the Jewish altars of old; yours is the offering torn with beasts—covetousness, envy, ambition, worldliness, pride, jealousy. Your body, which you call “the temple of the living God,” this you have turned into “a house of merchandise;” take heed lest, unwittingly, it becomes a den of thieves; for many holier men than you have been drawn on by the tyrant who has captured you to devour widow’s houses and delight in extortion and injustice, while, for a pretence, or perhaps as an anodyne to their consciences, they made long prayers and received cordial and respectful greetings in the synagogues.

Blame not society for your spiritual poverty. Society does not compel you to be rich. Society does not dictate how gorgeously you shall furnish your houses, how expensively you shall educate your children, or how large a fortune you shall leave to them at your death. Let conscience speak, let it sift to the bottom of that worldly heart of yours; cleanse it from the rust of covetousness, and bare it before Almighty God, and you will easily discover that pride—worldly pride, ambitious pride, selfish pride, the pride which brought down holy angels from the heights of heaven—has brought

leanness into your soul, made God's sanctuary of little value in your eyes, and its services distasteful to your heart. This pride is rapidly sapping those Christian principles which once ruled your thoughts and actions, and which you then longed to see ruling the thoughts and actions of your beloved children. Pause ere it be too late, my brother, and ask, "What shall it profit me, if I gain the whole world and lose my own soul?" What shall it profit my family, if I leave to them an inheritance larger than father left before, if, by my worldly example, by my worldly influence, they lose their priceless, undying, immortal souls?

And, Christian friends, all of you, we ask you, in God's name, to discountenance those late hours of business which make the Sabbath a weariness where it would otherwise be a pleasure, and which give to the worldling a plausible excuse for spending its holy hours in recreation. We ask you to see to it that you give not your custom to those who "grind the faces of the poor," who defraud the labourer of his just hire, who give to him such scanty pay that, night and day, he must ply his unceasing task, or his little ones must starve.

The poor needlewoman, who, if she would live at all, must either give little rest to her eyes or slumber to her eyelids, or else receive the wages of iniquity, what can she know of reverence for the sanctuary, of love for its blessed services? Of little use is it to build

churches and chapels, to go out into the streets and lanes of our city and persuade the people to enter them, while Christian manufacturers, Christian traders, Christian purchasers, for the sake of securing or encouraging a little paltry pelf, rob them of the physical power which is necessary for the hearty and pleasant participation of its services.

If Christian professors would but, unitedly or individually, resolve to deal with no man in business until they had ascertained that he gave a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, we think the lesson of their principles would gradually pervade society, until the hard taskmaster found it his best policy to be honest and generous to his workmen.

If Christian employers were more just, more liberal, to their dependents, than worldly men, we think that, by ensuring the best servants, by calling forth their esteem, and teaching them, by their own consistency, that there is such a thing as a right action and a wrong one, quite as surely as there are such things as profit and loss, they would find that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come." They might not be quite so rich in the eyes of the world—for it is still a common sight to see the wicked in great power, "spreading himself like a green bay tree"—but, with the favour of God, and His blessing on their more moderate gains, those gains would bring to the godly man happiness a

hundredfold greater than that of the richest extortioner the world ever knew.

If this seems a digression from the subject, we ask your forgiveness, Christian reader. We think this hastening to be rich is one of the sins which rob the churches of their piety and the sanctuaries of the loving reverence, which it is our object to revive and increase.

Another cause for the want of this reverence, we believe, may be found in *the supposed intellectual wants of our age*. It is said boldly, and with some colour of truth, that the pulpit must keep pace with the march of intellect, else it will lose its hold on the minds of the young. So says society; but God does not ask the Christian minister to descend from the high dignity with which He has invested him, of His own ambassador, and stand side by side with the lecturer, the orator, the author, or the newspaper, contending for the public ear and the public approval. I might speak of the unjust pressure on the mental powers of the preacher which this notion exacts. If, to ensure your respect and attention, he must, twice or even three times a week, produce a literary work which shall vie, in talent and interest, with that of an author who has spent months or years in its compilation, no wonder that he finds his mental energies fail, and his nervous system worn out, when other men have scarcely reached their prime.

We might prove to you the injustice of this

exaction, by reminding you that, in our public assemblies, men of high intellectual attainments are rare; and that which would excite and interest their minds would be as a strange language to the common people, who so gladly listened to the Great Teacher "who spake as never man spake," and in His plain, simple, homely teaching, left his ministers an example that they should follow His steps.

But we would rather ask you, are you wiser than "the only wise God, who hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty," who, by preaching which to the Greek seemed foolishness, hath saved millions of souls, who are now as holy as the angels in heaven?

We plead not for weakness in the pulpit; we believe that every faithful minister will diligently seek out appropriate truths and acceptable words. But we ask in the pews for that child-like reverence for God which "trembles at His Word," even though the messenger that speaks it be not gifted with lofty genius or mighty intellect. We remind you that it is not without design that God hath placed His priceless "treasure in earthen vessels," and we would recall to your memories the esteem in which those earthen vessels are held by their great projector. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Him that sent you."

We marvel not that the Spirit of the Lord seems straitened in our churches when we find

that the favorite theme of conversation in Christian circles is the merits or defects of their ministers, that our very phraseology is tainted with the leprosy of this irreverence. "How did you like him?" Like whom? God's messenger? What was the message of God to thee? "What a dry, uninteresting sermon!" Was it God's truth? Had you an appetite for the truth? A hungry man will not delay to eat until he has examined the dish which contains his welcome meal, or refuse to eat if the dish does not exactly meet with his approval. "What a beautiful discourse!" Will a thirsty man be so lost in admiration of the cup which a kind neighbour brings to him, that he shall empty the water which was meant to slake his thirst, the better to study its brilliant colours, its delicate pencilings, or its graceful form?

The commercial spirit of the times, too, has crept into our language about sacred things. We speak of a minister, a church, a congregation: "How do they get on? Is the minister successful?" Tell me, how do you measure his success? By the number of his hearers? Let me remind you that the balances of the sanctuary are in God's hand. In that last great day, when this among all secrets shall be made manifest, it may prove that the patient, obscure labourer, in a corner of God's vineyard, hath brought more fruit into life eternal, in the holy lives and well-instructed minds and devout hearts of the few whom God hath entrusted to His care, than he

on whose lips thousands hang with breathless interest, whose talent and eloquence call forth the loudest praises and the most fulsome flatteries.

We marvel not that the children of Christian parents care not for the sanctuary and its services, that even those among them who are born again of the incorruptible seed of God's Word, attain not the strength and stature of young men in Christ Jesus, when from earliest infancy the Christian minister has been the subject of discussion in their hearing, when, instead of being taught to love and respect him, they are suffered to laugh unrebuked at his peculiarities or his weaknesses. If you would see pure religion and undefiled prosper in our land, if you would see the fear of God and reverence for His holy house flourish in your own households, we ask you, with thoughtful, tender care, to watch over the sanctity of all that appertains to it, to frown against the unkind criticism, the uncharitable suspicion, the harsh censure, against its ministers, to cover their failings, to magnify their excellencies, to banish from your houses all ridicule, all evil speaking, all contempt of God's dignified, though weak and erring, ambassadors.

There is much wisdom in the suggestion of one whose advice is generally worth having: "Let not the pastor whom thou hearest be too much a familiar in thy house, for thy children

may see his infirmities and learn to cavil at his teaching."

We ask you, my friend, to enter God's house, to teach your children and influence your neighbours to enter it in the Spirit of the holy child Samuel : " Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." We ask you to listen there in the spirit of the converted Saul of Tarsus : " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?" Then shall you find that God hath given you so much to do that you have no time for that unprofitable gossip about ministers which pervades our Christian drawing-rooms. Oh ! if Christian professors would but use those occasions for " provoking one another to love and to good works," then all their social meetings, all their everyday converse, would become acts of worship to Him to whom belongeth the service of the lips, wherever we may be, or whoever may be our associates. Then would the Word preached by God's ministers be the power of God unto their more complete deliverance from sin, and their more perfect meetness " for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Another cause for the want of reverence for the sanctuary, seemingly the very reverse of the last, may prove, on closer examination, as nearly akin to it as extremes are often found to be. We allude to "*the undue prominence given to the pulpit above the devotional parts of the service.*" Is it not a fact that in some sanctuaries

the worship is endured as a delay, rather than entered into with delight? We believe this is chiefly true in dissenting communities, where too often the whole interest is reserved for the sermon. We know that among thoughtful Non-conformists there is a growing dissatisfaction with the present state of the devotional services of their sanctuaries.

Who is to blame? It may be the *ministers*; for, in burdening their memories, and taxing their mental powers, to pander to the depraved tastes of their hearers, they have so oppressed their own minds, as to take away the soul of devotion from their prayers. It may be the *hearers*; for they have come to the sanctuary expecting to be prayed into a praying frame, and sung into a singing frame, instead of bringing with them a soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a heart attuned to join in joyful concert with other grateful hearts.

The evil exists, however, and instead of blaming each other for its existence, ministers and people seem wisely disposed to ask, what shall be done to meet it? Let us have a liturgy, say some, and they point us to those churches where liturgies are used, and tell us how much greater is the love of public worship, the reverence for its devotional services, the decency, and order, and apparent devoutness of the congregation, than where all is left to the choice and guidance of the minister. They tell us, too, that the pastor is relieved of much labour, and his own

heart may be refreshed by such help as a written prayer affords, while he is spared the responsibility which sometimes depresses him, when he remembers that hundreds are depending for the exciting or sustaining of devout feelings on the present state of his own piety, for, alas! his piety, like theirs, is subject to constant ebbs and flows. They tell us, too, that the audible response of the congregation, and their personal participation in the services, tend to rivet their attention, drive away distracting thoughts, and stir up their hearts to devout and truest supplication and adoration. All this, we believe, is true, and we know of nothing in the principles of Nonconformity that forbids the use of a liturgy, nor did their forefathers. If you question this, we refer you to Baird 'On Liturgies,' of which Mr. Binney, in the preface, writes: "There are those who will be surprised to find that Calvin not only approved of forms of prayer, but that he lamented the lengths to which some had gone in rejecting altogether certain ecclesiastic rites and ceremonies; that Knox prepared an order for public worship, which was adopted and sanctioned by the General Assembly of Scotland, and that his own last hours were soothed and solaced, and his soul refreshed, by a prayer being read to him out of a book; that some of the English Puritans and separatists used the prepared continental forms in their secret meetings; and that, later, Nonconformists had no objection to a liturgy, as such, but only

wished some changes to be made in that which was in use, that it should not be exclusively enforced, that there should be the means of giving variety to the service and the opportunity afforded of free prayer."

On the other hand, much may be said on the advantages of free prayer, its constant variety and freshness, its adaptation to circumstances, especially to the subject of the sermon, and its smaller risk of becoming a mere form. We confess we should not like to see it banished from our sanctuaries, nor have we yet discovered why this should be the general effect of the introduction of a liturgy. The experiment is being tried once more, whether they can exist together; tried, too, with a liturgy which is not repeated Sabbath after Sabbath, and is, therefore, expected not to degenerate into a mere form, for then a liturgy, instead of being a help, becomes a hindrance to devotion. Many are watching with anxiety the result of this experiment, believing that a revival of interest in the devotions of the sanctuary, at the outset, is not a certain pledge of its success, inasmuch as any change is sure to create a fresh stimulus to the feelings of the congregation.

Other devout ministers, deplored the want of interest in the public worship of God, are giving to its devotional parts an equal share of study and attention with the sermon, rightly judging that an address to the Creator requires as much care in the selection of words and sen-

timents as an address to the creature. As might have been expected, they have succeeded in bringing into this part of the service an interest and earnestness which secures the attention and devotion of their congregations, and we rejoice in their success.

For let the public prayer be after a form, or let it be free, this we say, that true reverence for God's house will not be revived until its devotional services are esteemed as highly as its sermons and its lectures; until man first speaks with God in grateful adoration, and humble, penitential prayer, and then listens in a child-like spirit to his voice.

It is true that reformations have seemed generally to begin with preaching, and that in the ages of Papal darkness preaching had fallen almost into disuse. But what was that which they called prayer in those dark ages? The repetition of vain forms in an unknown tongue, which found no sympathy in the hearts of priests or people.

It is true that the revival of religion in the last century began with preaching, the preaching of Whitfield and Wesley. Multitudes were drawn from the churches where they had been accustomed to worship, and beneath the vault of heaven they learned that God was not confined to "temples made with hands." It may be that false inferences were then drawn from this truth, which awoke upon that generation *with the freshness of a new discovery*, and that

we are not yet recovered from the extreme to which it led. Because God forsook those churches where the cross of His beloved Son was despised or neglected, and followed His servants who preached "repentance and remission of sins through that cross," He meant not to teach future generations that when, reconciled to Him, they had nothing to do in His public worship but listen to sermons and rejoice in the truths which they unfolded. He would still have them meet for social prayer and social praise in buildings dedicated to His service, for well He knows how much their holiness and love to Him needs His constant renewal of its strength.

There is a feature in the religious movements of our own day which, with all its fair promise of usefulness, like all human devices, may, in the absence of watchful care, bring its attendant evils. Men who would not once have dared to preach in other places than those formally set apart to God's service are breaking the bread of life in concert-rooms and theatres. We bid them God's speed in their mission of mercy to the outcasts and wanderers, there listening to the message of salvation by Christ.

But we should mourn if this new movement had a tendency to encourage "itching ears," or to draw Christians from the churches or chapels where they are wont to worship, and make their services tame and uninteresting after the excitement of those crowded assemblies.

We should mourn if the public worship of God became subordinate to the preaching of His servants, if the tie that attaches sanctity to the place where God hath recorded His name be broken, for the Church can ill afford to lose one jot or tittle of the reverence for God's house. So is the mind of man constituted, that it depends on external forms for its deepest feelings and holiest emotions. Light esteem for God's sanctuary will soon induce light esteem for the God of the sanctuary.

Let us, then, take good heed to ourselves and to others to avoid all that lessens, and to foster all that increases, the respect for God's house. Thus shall we help forward the progress of true religion ; for just as there are blessings which God has connected with secret prayer, which we can gain through no other channel, so are there blessings connected with each ordinance of his house, each sacrament that he hath instituted, which he refuses to bestow in any other channel save the one He hath Himself approved.

Until our own souls, and the souls of those we ought to care for, are so increased in riches, that their growing wealth need no longer be our study, let us covet earnestly those divine blessings, more earnestly than the miser desires to add to his beloved hoards, of which he dreads to lose the smallest portion.

Does God, in His providence, take us away from the services of the sanctuary ? Then He

will be a **sanctuary unto us** in our houses. But let us be careful that it is God's providence, not our indifference, our worldiness, our ungodliness, that has robbed us of those services, for through no other channel will He suffer its blessings to flow. Soon we hope to meet in a city where there is no temple, where our spiritual bodies and our purified souls shall see, and love, and worship the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb who are themselves the temple of that city.

There the worshippers shall feel no weariness, no decay of strength or zeal, no abatement of holy ardour and love.

But while we sojourn here below, let it be our study to use the services of our earthly sanctuaries, that our worship in heaven shall bring to our hearts the greatest possible intensity of joy. For just as there are different degrees of interest and delight in the assemblies who listen to the harmonies of this world's music, or gaze on the works of art, or read the creations of our mighty poets, so may we find it in the assembly above.

May we, reader and writer, have a right to enter into that holy city, and may we enter with a heart as fully attuned to its harmonies as human heart can be, a soul as capacious to receive its joys as human soul can be. Then, while we look back with tenderest and deepest love on the places and the assemblies where we used to worship God here, we shall cast our crowns before the Lamb that sitteth on the throne, and,

with joy more intense and enraptured than we have ever half-conceived, we shall continue to sing the song which we loved to sing in these lower sanctuaries :—“ Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.”





